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Senator Dianne Feinstein

of California

Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein - on President Bush's State of the Union Address -

January 20, 2004

“This speech was thin on vision. Thin on what might happen in Iraq. And thin in terms of domestic policy, particularly with respect to the enormous deficit.

It was my hope that President Bush would set aside partisan differences and reach out -- not just to leaders, but to the rank and file of the Congress and to the American people. But unfortunately that hasn't happened, and things have gotten more and more partisan over the years.

In tonight's speech, I had hoped that the President would talk about what the workplace is going to be in the future, and how he would create new jobs. We need to increase the job base for this nation and reverse business practices and trade policies that have made outsourcing and downsizing the economic order of the day. Nearly 3 million jobs have been lost since President Bush took office and nearly 5 million men and women are unemployed and looking for work.

This Administration has led our nation from record budget surpluses to record budget deficits -- from a \$236 billion surplus in 2000 to an estimated \$500 billion deficit in 2004 alone. The Administration is tapping the Social Security trust fund that was meant to protect our nation's seniors. And now he is proposing to partially privatize Social Security, which could cost \$1 trillion over the next decade.

There is a major disconnect between the spending programs he has put forward -- \$1.5 billion for marriage, for instance -- and the fiscal discipline that is necessary to halve the deficit within 5 years

There is also a major disconnect on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq -- between what he says David Kay told him, and what David Kay told the Senate intelligence committee.

In fact, I believe that we were misled with respect to Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq. Somewhere along the line the decision was made to use WMD as the *raison d'être* of the war. None have been found, and this is really a cause for major concern. Another problem is that there was really no planning for post-war Iraq. As a result, you now have an insecure country filled with rivalries and feuds, which somehow is supposed to become a democracy where everyone gets along. Most people who have experience in that country believe it is very risky, and it is a real question whether a democracy can flourish there.

Ultimately, I do not believe that this speech had a sense of vision about the direction of this nation and where we are going. A lot of time was spent on defending the past -- justifying the

Administration's position on Iraq, on tax cuts for the wealthy, and the economy -- rather than bringing this nation together."

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